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## Examination of trait anxiety levels of physical education and sports students (Ibrahim Cecen University case)

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the trait anxiety levels of physical education and sports students and to compare them in terms of certain variables (gender, doing sports regularly and being a registered athlete). The research population is composed of students studying in the School of Physical Education and Sports, Ağrı Ibrahim Cecen University; while the sample group consists of 209 students studying in the Departments of Physical Education and Sports Teaching (n=147) and Coaching Education (n=62). “State-Trait Anxiety Inventory,” which was developed by Spielberger et al. (1970) and adapted to Turkish by Oner and Le Compte (1983), and certain questions concerning demographic characteristics were used to achieve the research objectives. SPSS 17.0 software package was used for data analysis. Percentage frequency analysis was used for data analysis and t-test was used for independent groups. Significance level was set at 0.05. Considering the findings, no statistically significant difference was found between the trait anxiety levels of students in terms of their gender and status of doing sports regularly ( $p < 0.05$ ).

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*Keywords:* trait anxiety; gender; sport.

### 1. Introduction

People confronted with two basic feelings since their existence on earth. These feelings are fear and anxiety. Anxiety is a phenomenon that we all experience from time to time and affects our lives in various ways. Anxiety has always been one of the most fundamental and extant problems that had been started along with the history of

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humanity. The concept of anxiety has entered to the field of psychology in the first half of that century, and studies and researches in this field have begun to be conducted after 1940 (Köknel, 1989; Eraslan, 2009). Anxiety adversely affects the ability of people to take right decisions. The higher anxiety level of human being gets him out of exhibiting his skills without taking right decisions (Bedir, 2008). The biological markers, rich psychological state and personality in the mixed social relationships bag of a human being are the most important elements of human recognition. Psychological state and psychological markers of an individual do must be considered in assessment of one's behaviors (İlbay, 2000). Anxiety is the foremost psychological marker among others. Anxiety was defined as "state of arousal which manifests itself along with the physical, emotional and mental changers and transformations when a person confronts with a problem that worries him or a waiting state that makes him upset and distressed" (Tekindal, 2010). Cox (1998) defined anxiety as "increased physiological arousal and subjective anxiety". Weinberg and Gould (1995) stated anxiety as an emotional state about nervousness, anxiousness and distress along with the arousal of the body. As well as different definitions of anxiety, different classifications have also been made for the anxiety in accordance with prevalence (Spielberger, 1966). Anxiety can be dealt with two different ways in studies and researches in general; the first is the state anxiety and the second is the trait anxiety. The non-permanent type of anxiety created by dangerous situations is named as 'state anxiety'. However some people constantly become anxious about the dangers of the environment independently. This type of anxiety is named as 'trait anxiety'. As 'state anxiety' is accepted as a normal feeling, 'trait anxiety' is defined as a 'personality trait' which requires treatment (Öner, 1983). Trait anxiety is a permanent personality trait of a person against psychological distresses. However, state anxiety is a temporary mood which changes according to changing environment and situations (Aşçı, 1995). As can be understood from these definitions, trait anxiety state is a type of anxiety which affects the academic and social life of a person much more deeply. Anxiety is a fundamental feeling and emotive phenomenon of people. This feeling emerges in threatening situations that a person face confronts in his life and social environment.

In line with these explanations, the aim of this study is to examine and evaluate the students studying in the School of Physical Education and Sports, Agri Ibrahim Cecen University in the second term of the 2013-2014 academic year in terms of trait anxiety state, gender and doing regular sports.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1. Participants*

Study group of this research is composed of total 209 students, 141 males (67,5%) and 68 females (32,5%), studying in the School of Physical Education and Sports, Agri Ibrahim Cecen University in 2013-2014 academic year spring semester. In the research, there are 71 first grade students (34,0%), 68 second grade students (32,5%), 36 third grade students (17,2%) and 34 fourth grade students (16,3%). Of the total participants, 147 students (70,3%) are studying in the Department of Physical Education and Sports Teaching and 62 students (29,7%) are studying in the Department of Coaching Education. While 94 participants (45%) stated they were doing sports regularly; 115 of them (55%) said they did not.

### *2.2. Data Collection Tools*

"State-Trait Anxiety Inventory" of 20 items, which was developed by Spielberger et al. (1970) and adapted to Turkish by Öner and Le Compte (1983), and certain questions concerning demographic characteristics were used to achieve the research objectives.

### *2.3. Data Analysis*

SPSS 17.0 software package was used for data analysis. Percentage frequency analysis was used for data analysis and t-test was used for independent groups. Significance level was set at 0.05

### 3. Results

Table 1. Descriptive statistics concerning trait anxiety scores and Cronbach's Alfa value

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Sd	Cronbach's Alfa
Trait anxiety	209	25	65	43.52	7.18	0,75

When descriptive statistics concerning trait anxiety scores are examined, the minimum score was found 25 and the maximum score was found 65. The mean score of participants was found  $43.52 \pm 7.18$ . Cronbach's Alfa value was determined as 0,75 and this figure is above the accepted value of 0.70.

Table 2. T-test results concerning trait anxiety scores in terms of gender

Gender	N	Mean	Sd	p
Male	141	43,29	7,06	0,50
Female	68	44,00	7,47	

According to the results of t-test analysis conducted on independent groups in terms of gender, no significant difference was found between the mean trait anxiety scores of the female and male students ( $p > 0,05$ ).

Table 3. T-test results concerning trait anxiety scores in terms of doing sports regularly

Doing Sports Regularly	N	Mean	Sd	p
Yes	94	43,16	6,37	0,51
No	115	43,82	7,80	

According to the results of t-test analysis conducted in terms of doing sports regularly, no significant difference was found between the mean trait anxiety scores of the students doing sports regularly and the ones do not ( $p > 0,05$ ).

### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

When Table 2 is examined, it's seen that 67,5% of total students are male and 32,5% of them are female and that no significant difference exists between the trait anxiety levels of the female and male students ( $p > 0,05$ ). Thus, it can be said that gender has no impact on trait anxiety levels of students. In their study carried out for examining the effect of satisfying basic psychological needs on general self-efficacy and trait anxiety, Sari et al. (2011) also determined that there was no significant difference in trait anxiety scores in terms of gender. The study of Civan (2010) and Gurbuz (2003) is also in line with the findings of this research. However, Segal and Weinberg (1989) found in their research that females have a higher level of trait anxiety than males. This difference may be resulted from social gender roles or from occupational, economic and family status of females. Considering Table 3, no significant difference was found in trait anxiety levels of the students doing sports regularly and the ones do not. There are various studies in line with this finding of our research. For example, in their researches carried out on different groups, Yucel (2003), Erbas (2005), Adali (2006) and Bingol et al. (2012) found that the year of doing sports had no impact on state-trait anxiety levels of athletes. In his study, Ogut (2004) also found no significant relationship between trait anxiety and doing sports. These findings are in line with the research findings. On the other hand, in his study carried out in UK, Fox, K.R. (1999) researched the effect of physical activity on mental health and found that physical activity improves emotional health, decreases trait anxiety and develops self-esteem.

### 5. Suggestions

That there is no significant difference in the variable of gender for the students of the School of Physical Education and Sports, Agri Ibrahim Cecen University is one of the results shows parallelism with many other studies conducted in this field as a result of literature search. However, while expecting a difference in trait anxiety levels of students in accordance with them doing sports regularly, the results shows us that there is no significant difference. The reason for this result brings the ideas into mind that individuals who say that they do sports regularly have low density of doing sports or do not reflect necessary diligence and performance in the sports

environment. Another reason may be that coaches may have not planned trainings in necessary intervals or the rate of participation to trainings may be low. It is suggested that students who say they do sport regularly should be raised awareness by their team coaches about the training frequency continuity and the teachers and coach candidates studying in the schools of Physical Education and Sports should be trained and educated by faculty members much more consciously.

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